

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) issued the following statement in recognition of the 45th anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid being signed into law:

“Compared to a time when only about half of our nation’s seniors had health insurance, Medicare now serves approximately one in seven Americans and virtually all of the population aged 65 and older.

“However, our job is far from over. It is imperative that we continue to protect and improve Medicare so that we can fulfill our promise of providing older and disabled Americans with the benefits that they need and deserve.

“In March, I proudly voted in favor of the *Affordable Care Act*, which makes numerous changes to Medicare to ensure its ability to provide affordable and quality health care to our nation’s most vulnerable citizens. The *Affordable Care Act*

will make it easier for seniors to afford seeing their doctors, fill their prescriptions, and provide them with free preventative screenings and tests. Furthermore, it will close the infamous Medicare “doughnut hole,” helps middle-class families afford long-term care, strengthens the fiscal solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund, and much, much more.

“Medicare is one of our nation’s great health care success stories. As we celebrate 45 years of health care coverage for the hundreds of millions of Americans who have benefitted from Medicare, we must not forget our commitment to this and future generations by ensuring its preservation and continued improvement. This is our legacy.”

On July 30, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Social Security Amendments of 1965, thereby establishing the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Forty-five years later, Medicare provides health care coverage to an estimated 39 million seniors and 8 million disabled persons. In addition, Medicaid provides primary and acute medical services, as

well as long-term care, to more than 68 million people.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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